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# A Facilitator's Guide

for the Know Stroke Community Education Kit and Video

## The Public Health **Impact** of Stroke

Stroke places a major burden on our society in death, disability, and economic costs. Annually, about 600,000 new strokes are reported in the United States, costing an estimated \$43 billion. Stroke is the third leading cause of death and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in adults. If you or someone you know experiences the symptoms of stroke, call 911 immediately. Getting to the hospital within 60 minutes and getting treatment can prevent disability.



**Call 911** immediately. Getting treatment can prevent disability.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) developed the *Know Stroke* campaign to help educate the public about the symptoms of stroke and the importance of getting a stroke patient to the hospital quickly. By showing the enclosed videotape and distributing the *Know Stroke* brochures provided in this kit, you can help reduce the enormous personal and economic toll that stroke takes.

*Know Stroke. Know the Signs. Act in Time.* is an informative, upbeat, eight-minute videotape that teaches audiences about the symptoms of stroke and the need to react quickly if someone is having a stroke. The video is aimed at a general audience and includes interviews with experts in the field of stroke, as well as stories from patients who have successfully recovered from a stroke.

The video can be shown in a wide variety of settings, including assisted living and retirement communities, senior citizen centers, hospitals, health clinics, health fairs, community and church meetings, and clubs and associations.

Please preview the video today. Then schedule your first stroke awareness program as soon as possible — because what you do can make the difference between a life of disability or a life of full recovery from stroke.



# HOW TO PLAN A *KNOW STROKE* AWARENESS

Whether you plan to schedule a special showing of the *Know Stroke* video or include it as part of a larger meeting, the tips and materials in this guide will help make your presentation a success.

## **Choose a setting.**

It may be best to show the video in small group meetings — in churches, community centers, or health clinics. If you choose a public place, make sure it has restrooms, adequate parking, and accommodations for people who use wheelchairs or are disabled. The location should be as convenient for everyone as possible. It should also have a room that can be darkened while the video is playing.

## **Decide on the size and format for the program.**

You may want to invite a local stroke expert or a panel of experts to speak and answer questions. Before the program, make sure your speakers have time to view the video. You may want to set up several presentations of the video on the same day for different groups. Allow enough time at each presentation to talk about stroke, watch the video, and have a discussion afterwards. Decide if you will offer refreshments.

## **Pick a date.**

The date you choose should give you plenty of time to make arrangements and take care of the little things that may arise unexpectedly. Make sure the date and time are good for your speaker(s) and for the people who will want to attend.

## **Arrange for equipment.**

You will need a VCR (video cassette recorder) connected to a standard television set (19" or larger) to show this VHS video. If you expect a large audience, you may want to set up two or more television sets (monitors). All these monitors can be hooked up to one VCR. Also, if you have a large group, you may want to have a microphone for the speaker(s). Make sure to have someone available who is experienced at setting up all the equipment you will be using.

## **Think about materials to hand out.**

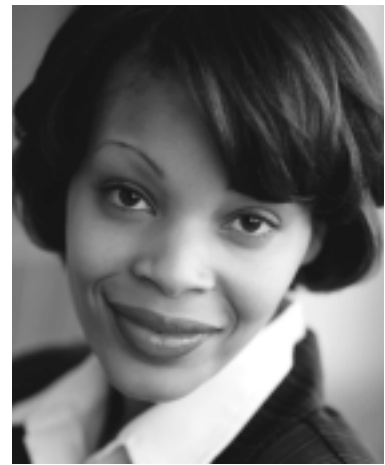
Have plenty of copies of the *Know Stroke* brochure. You may order additional copies by calling 1-800-352-9424. There may be other materials available from your speaker or local stroke resources. A number of national organizations are listed at the end of this section.

## **Publicize your program.**

If you are inviting only a few people, you can invite each of them personally. But if you are planning for a larger group (more than 15), or choose to create broad awareness for the program, you may want to publicize your event.

Use the posters provided with this kit. Three weeks before your event, mail or hand out copies of the poster to the people you are inviting. You can also display a poster in places where your target audience is likely to see it: senior citizen centers, community centers, libraries, health

# SS PROGRAM



clinics, hospitals, or clubs. Be sure to get permission before doing so.

Consider using your local media to publicize the program. Many community newspapers and local cable companies run weekly health event calendars that are likely to list your stroke awareness program if you send them the necessary information. Check with your local media outlets for their requirements. In general, you should submit your listings about a month before your event. Many radio stations, particularly public radio stations, carry announcements of community events so you may want to contact them as well.

If you want to promote stroke awareness beyond the audience for your event, you should contact health reporters from local newspapers and television stations. Try to interest them in doing a feature story about stroke symptoms and treatments, perhaps profiling a patient who has a success story to share. If you write to them, be sure to call to follow-up.

## What to do on the day of your event.

Set up the VCR, television monitor, and sound equipment well before the scheduled time of your program. If possible, have your guest speaker arrive early to view the video. Make sure there are enough chairs in the room, and know where to find more if you need them. Set up enough tables for hand-out materials, a sign-in sheet if you want one, and refreshments if you are providing them. Locate the light switches and assign someone to operate them when the video is shown. Do a final check of the following:

- Make sure the VCR can take a VHS video.
- Check that the television monitor and VCR are hooked up and working properly.
- Make sure the television monitor can be seen and heard by all the guests.
- If your speakers are using a microphone, make sure it is operating correctly and can be heard throughout the room.

You may also want to have a pitcher of water and glasses for your speakers.

- Make sure that all handouts are ready for distribution.

## Additional Resources

The *Know Stroke* brochure and other publications about stroke are available from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. To order these materials contact us at:

- **BRAIN**  
P.O. Box 5801  
Bethesda, MD 20824  
1-800-352-9424  
[www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)

The following organizations can also provide additional information:

- **American Stroke Association,**  
a division of the American Heart Association  
1-800-AHA-USA1  
(1-800-242-8721)  
[www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org)
- **National Stroke Association**  
1-800-STROKES  
(1-800-787-6537)  
[www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)

# FACTS ABOUT STROKE

The following information will help you discuss stroke with your audience. It includes some key messages that are repeated in the video and the *Know Stroke* brochure.

## What is a stroke?

A stroke, sometimes called a “brain attack,” occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, brain cells in the immediate area begin to die because they stop getting the oxygen and nutrients they need.

## What causes a stroke?

There are two types of stroke. The first, called an ischemic stroke, is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel or artery leading to or in the brain. About 80 percent of all strokes are ischemic.

The second type, known as a hemorrhagic stroke, occurs when a blood vessel breaks and bleeds into the brain. About 20 percent of strokes are hemorrhagic.

## How common is stroke?

Approximately 600,000 new strokes are reported in the United States each year and about 160,000 Americans die each year as a result of stroke. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in adults.

## What disabilities can result from a stroke?

Although stroke is an injury to the brain, a stroke can affect the entire body. The effects of a stroke range from mild to severe and can include paralysis, problems with thinking, and problems with speaking. Fifty to 70 percent of stroke survivors regain some functional independence, but 15 to 30 percent are seriously disabled.







### **What are the symptoms of a stroke?**

The symptoms of a stroke are distinct because they appear suddenly:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

### **Why is there a need to act fast?**

Stroke is a medical emergency. Immediate treatment can protect the brain and enhance chances for successful recovery. A physician must evaluate and treat a patient within 3 hours of the first sign of a stroke for the greatest chance of recovery. The longer that normal blood flow to the brain is impaired, the greater the chance for damage. Every minute counts. If medical tests determine that the patient

is experiencing an ischemic stroke, new clot-busting drugs that restore blood flow can contribute to recovery with little or no disability—but only if the drugs are administered within 3 hours after the first symptoms appear. Someone experiencing a stroke, or recognizing a stroke in others, should call 911 immediately.

Because stroke injures the brain, a person having a stroke may not be able to take action. Stroke victims have the best chance for recovery if someone around them recognizes the symptoms and calls 911 immediately. A bystander may find that someone having a stroke seems unaware or confused.

### **Who is at risk for stroke?**

Certain people are at a higher risk of having a stroke than others. Advancing age is the primary risk factor for stroke. Nearly three-quarters of all strokes occur in people over the age of 65 and the risk of having a stroke more than doubles each decade after the age

of 55. The stroke risk for men is slightly higher than that for women. But more women die from stroke because, in general, women have strokes at older ages. African Americans are twice as likely to die from stroke as any other racial or ethnic group. The risk of stroke is also higher for smokers and for people who have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, a heart condition known as atrial fibrillation, sickle cell disease, high cholesterol, or a family history of stroke.

### **Can stroke be prevented?**

People can do much to reduce their risk of stroke, even though some risk factors — race, gender, and age — are obviously beyond our control. Everyone should monitor blood pressure and cholesterol levels and take medications if recommended by a doctor. In addition, some doctors will recommend taking medications to reduce blood clotting. People who smoke should stop and people who don't exercise regularly should start.